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FLOOR DEBATE

May 9, 2001

LB 692A, 833

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator. The question is the advancement of LB 692A. Those in favor say aye. Opposed nay. The bill is advanced. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, back to LB 833. Senator Bromm had pending AM1850. (Legislative Journal page 1845.)

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Debate on AM1850? Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Lieutenant Governor, members of the Legislature, I...in this matter of choosing between which fund should be used to support the distance education, let me say for openers that I support the effort of distance education, which, in effect, historically is an innovation and it seems to me appropriate that the finishing of this process should come out of what is essentially the Innovation Fund, if I'm understanding Senator Bromm's description. Therefore, I would be against the amendment and I hope you would be, too. But the main reason, not only does it, what he's doing right now, fit, but in terms of providing incentives for quality education, we really don't have a whole lot in this state. And this is perhaps our major program in terms of trying to encourage all school systems, and Senator Bromm mentioned the fact that this is not Omaha or Lincoln, this is an across-the-board incentive for quality schools. This is our one, big program to do that. And I don't want to see money taken away from it, even though it is more money than is in the Incentive Fund. But we need that more money there. And I want to reiterate or mention the fact that our public school system in Nebraska is so strong that the children of the wealthy, as well as the children of the middle class and the lower classes, send their kids to the public schools. And that is a great, great advantage from my perspective. And I want to see the public schools continue to improve in quality so that that will always be the case. I don't want it to be like New York, or New Jersey, or some of these states where the only people that go to the public schools are the...are the children of those who are least fortunate economically, and there is, in effect, a very real economic bifurcation in our education system. And I think that destroys the quality of society, generally. And I like the fact, I love